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ZNY CCCCC ZZH
P 270921Z MAR 08 ZDS MESSAGE RECEIVED GARBLED
FM AMEMBASSY HARARE
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2630
INFO RUCNSAD/SOUTHERN AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY
RUEHUJA/AMEMBASSY ABUJA 1886
RUEHAR/AMEMBASSY ACCRA 1839
RUEHDS/AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA 1963
RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA 1240
RUEHDK/AMEMBASSY DAKAR 1597
RUEHKM/AMEMBASSY KAMPALA 2019
RUEHNR/AMEMBASSY NAIROBI 4450
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC
RUEHGV/USMISSION GENEVA 1090
RHEHAAA/NSC WASHDC
RHMFISS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC
RUEHC/DEPT OF LABOR WASHDC
RUEATRS/DEPT OF TREASURY WASHDC
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC//DHO-7//
RUCPDOG/DEPT OF COMMERCE WASHDC
RUFOADA/JAC MOLESWORTH RAF MOLESWORTH UK//DOOC/ECMO/CC/DAO/DOB/DOI//
RUEPGBA/CDR USEUCOM INTEL VAIHINGEN GE//ECJ23-CH/ECJ5M//

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 HARARE 000231

SIPDIS

C O R R E C T E D COPY (MESSAGE GARBLED)

SIPDIS

AF/S FOR S. HILL
NSC FOR SENIOR AFRICA DIRECTOR B. PITTMAN
STATE PASS TO USAID FOR L.DOBINS AND E.LOKEN
TREASURY FOR J. RALYEA AND T.RAND
COMMERCE FOR BECKY ERKUL
ADDIS ABABA FOR USAU
ADDIS ABABA FOR ACSS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 03/27/2018
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [ASEC](#) [ZI](#)
SUBJECT: DISILLUSIONED CENTRAL COMMITTEE MEMBER SEEKS OUT
AMBASSADOR

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Classified By: Ambassador James D. McGee for reason 1.4 (d)

SUMMARY

1. (C) The Ambassador met March 24 with Manatsa Mutasa, a member of the Central Committee from Manicaland. Immensely disillusioned with ruling party corruption and no longer supporting ZANU-PF candidates in the election, he told the Ambassador that Morgan Tsvangirai had enough countrywide support to win the election on the first round, but rigging of the postal ballot vote had already begun and would guarantee Mugabe's victory. Mutasa was distrustful of Simba Makoni's break with Mugabe and discounted his candidacy except for its usefulness in exposing the divisions in ZANU-PF. He said a purge of ZANU-PF had begun and would worsen; CIO chief Happyton Bonyongwe and most CIO provincial heads had been suspended from duty on suspicion of disloyalty. He explained that Manicaland was fertile ground for opposition to ZANU-PF because its leaders had been sidelined from power since before independence. END SUMMARY.

Rigging of Postal Votes - The Numbers Don't Tally

2. (C) EconOff met Mutasa at his home in Watsomba in the

Mutasa Central district during a mission pre-election tour of Manicaland; during that meeting, Mutasa requested a meeting with the Ambassador. He told the Ambassador that election rigging had already begun and would assure Mugabe the presidency by a narrow first-round margin. Soldiers and police had been given 4-5 absentee ballots each and told to vote for Mugabe. The Central Intelligence Organization (CIO) stood ready to move in the stuffed ballot boxes in districts where the extra votes could tip the scales to Mugabe. In addition, Mutasa expected many voters to be turned away from the polls for lack of time on voting day, further reducing the number of opposition votes. He said MDC presidential candidate Morgan Tsvangirai had enough support from both urban and rural Zimbabweans, driven primarily by the economic meltdown, to win the election in the first round if it were not rigged. Simba Makoni's late entry into the race would have delivered the vote to the MDC "on a silver platter" by dividing ZANU-PF if the election were free and fair.

The Mutasa Dynasty Disillusioned with Mugabe

13. (C) Disgusted with rampant corruption in ZANU-PF, Mutasa has refused to campaign for the ruling party in this election. He referred to the Reserve Bank of Zimbabwe's (RBZ) involvement in the illicit diamond trade in Manicaland and the use of overseas proxies by Mugabe in his personal business affairs. He said one evil had replaced another evil in Zimbabwe since independence. Recognized as disgruntled, Mutasa had narrowly escaped a beating by thugs of Gender and Women's Affairs Minister Oppah Muchinguri this month and now feared for his life. He recounted to the Ambassador how Muchinguri ("not even a Manyika -- she hails from Masvingo"), speaking for the Women's League, had resolved at a Central Committee meeting in December that Mugabe be made President for life, only to have the resolution shot down by Vice

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President Msika. Mutasa said Speaker of Parliament John Nkomo and Minister Muchinguri, who is running for Parliament in Mutasa Central, were considering suspending him from the party after he failed to appear at a Nkomo-led rally in the district on March 8. Further disqualifying Mutasa among ruling party stalwarts, Mutasa's niece, Eunice Mangwende a former director in the Ministry of Information, is running against Muchinguri in Mutasa Central as a pro-Makoni independent candidate, and his nephew, Lincoln Mutasa, heir to the Mutasa chieftainship, is an independent candidate for the Senate from the same area.

14. (C) On Simba Makoni, Mutasa was mistrustful of his "double talk" about leadership change rather than regime change and suggested that Makoni and Mugabe were probably in some way still connected. It had been understood for years that Mugabe would relinquish power to Makoni, but, in the end, Mugabe had refused. Mutasa told the Ambassador that Zimbabwe needed "totally different leaders, a totally different party" and that ZANU-PF should be voted out of power until it rehabilitates itself. Nevertheless, the liberation war veteran who lost vision in one eye in the bush war told EconOff that he would never "cross the floor," i.e. change parties.

15. (C) Mutasa recommended harsh sanctions against Zimbabwe if Mugabe is declared president and also asked the Ambassador whether the USG had influence on the International Criminal Court (ICC) to issue a warrant for Mugabe's arrest based on the Matabeleland massacres of the 1980s; he said Mugabe feared prosecution. Reiterating that "Mugabe has to go," Mutasa let drop that a group of "concerned individuals" had decided to take steps to remove him and Mutasa had been tasked with procuring the necessary "material" to do the job. Without noting when the plan was hatched or who the participants were, he said he was still in possession of the material.

Violence and ZANU-PF Purge

¶16. (C) In response to the Ambassador's question about a possible backlash against the opposition, Mutasa feared violence if Mugabe succeeds in stealing the presidency, and violence, especially within ZANU-PF (it's "torn to pieces"), if Tsvangirai wins. Under either election outcome, a purge in ZANU-PF had already begun and would only deepen. He recounted that ZANU-PF youths, driven by mistrust, had beaten up other youths wearing ZANU-PF t-shirts after the rally led by John Nkomo in his district a week earlier; "people in ZANU-PF will disappear and be killed." At his home a week earlier, Mutasa told us that half the Central Committee no longer supported Mugabe and he assumed that the Politburo was similarly divided.

Manicaland - Hotbed of Opposition

¶17. (C) Mutasa told the Ambassador that Mugabe had recently suspended most CIO provincial heads and CIO chief Happyton Bonyongwe on suspicion of sympathy with presidential aspirant Simba Makoni. He pointed out that Bonyongwe, along with Makoni, Morgan Tsvangirai, Arthur Mutambara and Edgar Tekere

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were all from Manicaland. At his earlier meeting with EconOff, Mutasa had explained several reasons why Manicaland was a particular hotbed of opposition to Mugabe: the stranglehold on power by the tribes of Mashonaland since independence at the expense of the Manyikas; the unforgotten/unforgiven murder of ZANU Chairman Herbert Chitepo in Zambia in 1975, allegedly by Mugabe's forces; the GOZ's refusal to allow the burial of the founder and first president of ZANU Ndabaningi Sithole at Heroes Acre in 2000 (NOTE: Both Chitepo and Sithole were from Manicaland. END NOTE.); and the imposition several years ago by the GOZ of an unacceptable chief on the Mutasa dynasty after the heir showed signs of anti-ZANU-PF sentiment.

COMMENT

¶18. (C) Mutasa is one of about 180 members of the Central Committee and not a major player in Zimbabwe's politics. Nevertheless, he has been an insider, is well informed, and could be of use to us. He appears to be reaching out to us now out of credible deep disillusionment with ZANU-PF. We are not blind, however, to the possibility that he has other motives. We were particularly concerned by his vague reference to a past assassination plot, and made no reaction whatsoever to this story. END COMMENT.

MCCEE